Reviewer’s report

Title: Integrated monitoring and evaluation and environmental risk factors for urinary schistosomiasis and active trachoma in Burkina Faso before preventative chemotherapy using sentinel sites

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Reviewer: Jonathan King

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have made revisions to the manuscript and addressed most of my previous comments. I believe the manuscript quality and clarity has improved. My feeling remains that there two stories being joined in this manuscript that may be told better in separate manuscripts. The findings of the baseline data collection for the proposed integrated monitoring and evaluation of NTD programs using sentinel sites is most relevant. The associations between climate and trachoma are an interesting secondary finding, but the climactic associations (in the case of trachoma) have no programmatic relevance. I am not set against having the results of both primary and secondary aims presented here and defer to the editor’s decision. I recommend that the manuscript be published; however, there are some minor issues that should be addressed and additional minor revisions requested.

Requested minor essential revisions:

Abstract. The authors should not talk about infection or co-infection with C. trachomatis as only clinical signs were assessed. It is best to state “…as well as to elucidate the contribution of environmental variables to the risk of either urinary schistosomiasis, trachoma or both among school-aged children.” Also “risk of belonging to each infection disease category…” The authors should be specific that the prevalence measured was that only in sentinel sites. This was not a national survey to estimate prevalence. The authors could be clearer by stating “Overall prevalence from the among the sentinel sites assessed was…” also simply state “Urinary schistosomiasis and trachoma are public health problems in Burkina Faso.”

Background. MDA with azithromycin or tetracycline eye ointment is recommended, not just azithromycin. Page 5, second paragraph, “…to deliver some of treatments…” Page 5 last paragraph move the first two sentences to the first paragraph in the methods section describing the setting. Remove the sentence starting with “However, despite the current support..” it takes away from the flow of the paragraph and purpose of paper. The paragraph would then carry on from paragraph two where integration was introduced. Page 6, the words monitoring and evaluation do not need capitalizing. Page 6, again the authors should refrain to mentioning infection for trachoma. The authors should state that the planned analysis was to integrate disease assessment methodologies. The
analysis that was post-hoc was to analyze all of the climactic variables to assess for associations with disease. I am not sure how the authors intended to use the data to ‘inform’ the E component of SAFE. More clarity here would help the reader understand what the authors mean.

Discussion. Page 16, It is not clear what the authors mean in regards to the second to last sentence of the paragraph continued from page 15. The authors may suggest that their approach may be useful to monitor and evaluate integrated programs including trachoma, but not for planning where SAFE implementation should occur. This is currently based on prevalence of TF among the preferred 1-9 age group at the district level. Please edit to clarify the point for the reader.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.